



St. Mark Connection

9999 Ferguson Road Dallas, TX 75228 214-321-6437



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Seminary candidates for ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA) must pass a series of Ordination Exams in five areas:

theology, worship, polity (church governance), English language Bible competency, and Greek or Hebrew exegesis. If you're not familiar with that last word — exegesis — don't be alarmed. It simply means a systematic process by which a person arrives at a reasonable and coherent sense of the meaning and message of a Biblical passage.

By the way, these five examinations are taken in addition to other classroom tests. So, in preparing for the big five examinations, a seminary student juggles classroom demands with specialized study. All in all, this can be an anxiety producing process. The pressure mounts as the Ordination Exams approach, leading to a lot of soul searching: "If I fail, is that a sign I'm not really called to be a pastor?" Or, "If I fail, does it mean God is disappointed with me?"

I certainly was not immune to the pressure. As I prepared, I memorized one of my favorite definitions of faith, as written by John Calvin.

He said that faith is "a firm and certain knowledge of God's benevolence towards us, found upon the truth of the freely given

promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit."

I practically wore out the statement. But I found reassurance in it and was granted faith that, with God's assistance, I could pass all five of the tests on my first attempt.

Also sustaining me in the stress of this time was the gift of hope. Again, John Calvin came to my aid:

"Hope is nothing else than an expectation of the good things which faith has believed are truthfully promised by God. Thus faith believes that God is truthful; hope expects that He will reveal His truth in time. Faith believes that He is our Father; hope expects that He will reveal Himself as such toward us. Faith believes that eternal life is given to us; hope expects that we will one day obtain it. Faith is the foundation on which hope rests; hope nourishes and supports faith."

Because of faith granted by God and hope in the One who instilled the faith, I passed each of the exams on my first attempt. Faith and hope were vital to the process that allowed me to become an Ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PCUSA. God's gifts then and now have made it possible for me to serve as the pastor of St. Mark for seven years this month. Thanks be to God, and to you for calling me!
Blessings, Pastor Rick

St. Mark Blood Drive Results

We had 15 participants and received 14 pints of blood. A great big thank you to all who contributed. Potentially saving 42 lives, and keeping our 'bank' going and being Jesus' blood of life.

Sue Duncan



Sandwich Sunday

August 30th

see page 2 for details

Our Sympathy to . . .

Frank and Shirley Roberson and family upon the death of their daughter, Lynn Phillips. Lynn was a long-time active member of St. Mark and died on July 4, 2015.

Services for Lynn were held at St. Mark on Sunday, July 19, 2015.



Thank You

To our St. Mark Family,
Thank you so very much for everything you have done for Dean and me since April 5th when I had spinal surgery. Six weeks later I cracked my pelvis. Dean was in an auto accident on June 9th. He has been in the hospital and rehab since then. The St. Mark ladies have been wonderful to visit, drive me to see Dean or wherever I need to go. Doug, thanks again for fixing my cable and Danny thanks for the use of the family recliner to sit and sleep in. Thank you Rick for all the calls and visits. Thanks to everyone for their prayers.

Love, Dean and Harriett Anderson

White Rock Center of Hope Sunday, August 9th

Bring your donations and place them in the baskets in the hallway.



Food Needs

Canned Beans (pinto, kidney, etc.)

Boxed Shelf Items

Hamburger Helper, Suddenly Salad

Personal Hygiene Items

Toothpaste, Deodorant, Feminine Hygiene products



Sandwich Sunday August 30th

Each 5th Sunday we prepare and serve sandwiches at the **Austin Street Center**. Volunteers are asked to prepare **two or three dozen** sandwiches, **individually bagged** with the sack labeled as to the contents, and bring them to the church on that Sunday.

Cookies and snack cakes are also welcome.

Sign-up sheets are on the glass table in the narthex.

Volunteers are also needed to help serve the sandwiches at the Center on that Sunday evening.



The Church Pantry Needs . . .

Small jars of peanut butter and plastic forks and spoons

Sunday Sermons, Scriptures and Events

August 2

"It's Not What We Receive"
Isaiah 58:3-7; Matthew 6:16-18
Celebration of The Lord's Supper



August 9

"Keep It Simple, Servant"
Deuteronomy 24:17-22; Matthew 6:19-24

August 16

"First Things First"
1 Peter 5:5-7; Matthew 6:25-34

August 23

"The Real Supreme Court"
James 4:11-12; Matthew 7:1-5

August 30

"Speaking Up or Walking Away"
Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 7:6
Sandwich Sunday

God Bless You On Your Birthday

August 5

Anna Duncan
Charlene Taylor

August 6

Ed Blair
Pat McCloud

August 8

Randi Richards

August 9

Chuck Hathaway
Katie Moore

August 10

Michael Bell
Maylea Higgins

August 14

Elizabeth Cantu

August 15

Cecilia Grayson
Samantha Moore



August 17

Stephany Brown

August 18

James Carver

August 19

Charlene Ramsey

August 20

Ben Blair

August 21

Pam Winter

August 22

Terri Shevlin

August 23

Duncan Guinnee

August 27

Karen Ellis

Katie Husted

August 29

Susie Miller



No Movie Night In August

Movie Night will resume in September

Another Month for Randall's Odds and Ends

- Depending on when you are reading this the Cluster Adult VBS is either about to start, occurring right now, or just past. If you are reading before August 6th it is not too late to join in. The theme for the week is "Fire." We have some great presenters, fine host congregations, and several other neat things.
- While I am on the topic of VBS, if you haven't already please don't forget to thank Marilyn Jackson and her VBS team. They always do a wonderful job transforming our family center into a special place for children for a few nights each summer.
- We have been buying Sunday School curriculum resources for children the last couple of years. That is good news because we went a few years where we did not need to buy any. We will begin to use something new this Fall. It is called "Growing in Grace and Gratitude." I love that title. Gratitude is the appropriate response to God's grace. What does it mean to you to "grow in grace and gratitude?"
- What is your favorite passage or story from the Bible? I'll be asking the Session that question this month. We'll be including the answers on an insert we'll include with the "3rd Grade Bibles" the Christian Education Committee will give out in September. So what's your favorite passage? What is it that makes that passage special to you?
- One final question, "Who are you?" Longtime readers may recall that as the first question to one of the Presbyterian Catechisms. The answer is that "I am a child of God." That means that we belong to God who loves us. And we are children of God because of "Grace -- God's free gift of love that we do not deserve and cannot earn."
- So go out into the heat of August and remember to live as a beloved child of God as you seek to grow in grace and gratitude.

Randall McGee, Director of Christian Education

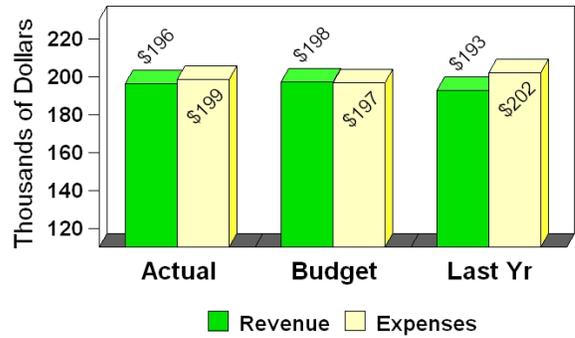
Newsletter Staff:

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Articles and information for the newsletter can be e-mailed to these addresses.

Operating Fund
12 Months Through June 30, 2015



Treasurer's Report

for the twelve months ending 6/30/2015

- ⇒ Operating Fund income was \$1,200 below budget and expenses were \$1,700 above budget.
- ⇒ Capital & Facilities Fund income was \$1,700 above budget and expenses are \$700 above budget.
- ⇒ Our Combined Fund Balance is up \$43,000 from the beginning of year.

Detailed financial statements are available for any member to review. Please contact the Treasurer, John Carver, or Bill Grayson if you would like to see more information.

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

On July 19, the congregation gathered for their annual meeting, and the following actions were approved:

- * Approved new Terms of Call for Rev. Rick Brooks
- * Approved bylaws for the St. Mark corporation
- * Elected 3 members to the 2016 Nominating Committee
- * Received Annual Reports from the session committees
- * Elected a Trustee to fill an unexpired term.

If you were unable to attend and would like an Annual Meeting packet, please contact the church office.

Dog Park Possibilities

In an effort to reach out and get to know our neighbors, the Mission and Outreach Committee is considering the feasibility of a dog park on the fenced property adjacent to the Princeton Building. A July 16th meeting with our neighbors to ascertain interest was a first step in this direction.

Barb Tuinstra

Newsletter Deadline is August 15th