



St. Mark Connection

9999 Ferguson Road

Dallas, TX 75228

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Volume 61, Issue 12

saintmarkchurch.org

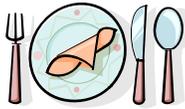
December 2014

St. Mark Christmas Dinner & Choir and Handbell Program

Sunday, December 14th at 6:00 p.m.

"Adoration, In Search of a King"

We must have your reservation by Sunday, December 7th



The cost of the dinner is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6 – 12. Children age 5 and under are free. The St. Mark Christmas Dinner and Choir program is on Sunday, December 14th at 6:00 p.m. We will take reservations until Sunday, December 7th after church, or you may call the church office.

The Fellowship Committee is preparing a menu of Pork Loin, Grilled Chicken, Roasted Red Potatoes, Pecan Broccoli, Cider Glazed Carrots, Salad, and Kentucky Gingerbread with Whipped Cream for dessert.

Following dinner we will move to the Sanctuary where the Handbell and Sanctuary Choirs will present special Christmas music.

Childcare will be provided for children 5 and under during the program.

Special Christmas Offering

St. Mark members are asked to open their hearts for our Special Christmas Offering. Half of the funds collected will go to the Joy Offering and half will go to the Ministry of Hope in Malawi, Africa.

The **Joy Offering** provides support for retired and active pastors and church workers and their families, as well as support for the racial-ethnic schools and colleges of the PC(USA).

The **Ministry of Hope** serves orphans, infants and widows in rural Malawi, Africa. Our offering this year will be used to provide scholarship support for children from the villages served by the Ministry of Hope attending high school, college and vocational trade schools.

The Session has set a goal of \$5,000 for this year's offering. Please prayerfully consider your gift to the offering as a reflection of your gratitude for the multitude of blessings that you have received.

Hanging of the Greens

Sunday, November 30th at 4:00 p.m.



Come join in the fun of getting the church ready for the Christmas season. On this first Sunday in Advent, starting at 4:00, we will begin decorating the outside of the building, the sanctuary, narthex and parlor. Later we will stop and have a short worship service with carol singing.

Open House

Rick & Teri Brooks invite you to their annual Open House on Sunday,

December 28th from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

2305 Primrose Dr. Richardson, Texas

Urgent!

The church Pantry is nearly bare.

Please see page 3 for details.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Wednesday, December 24th at 6:00 p.m.

Reception and Fellowship in the parlor at 5:30 p.m.





I'm not trying to mimic the curmudgeonly musings of the late "Sixty Minutes" commentator Andy

Rooney, but have you noticed that there are lots of unwelcomed interruptions vying for our attention, particularly during Advent? I've noticed that during this time of year I am bombarded with advertising—through the Internet, social media, radio, television, billboards, print—so much so that even my home answering machine gets overloaded.

In the midst of all of this noise, God tries to get our attention. He constantly calls you and me, never relenting in trying to break through. I'd like to think that God's redeeming message wouldn't get lost in the bustle of activities during Advent, but it can happen so quickly. Sadly, while awaiting the arrival of the Christ Child, it is possible for hearts to become parched and empty. How easy to miss the reality that the Word made flesh is moving into the neighborhood.

Two thousand years ago, God sent John the Baptist into a world that also had too much noise that distracted lost people. John said then - and it rings just as true today — that now is the time to move from living a self-centered life to one that is abundant only through God. The Messiah would quench parched hearts; prepare to greet him. Centuries earlier, the prophet Isaiah spoke of the season of preparation: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Is it time for you and I to turn down the noise and distractions that lure us into a frenzied life —leaving our hearts dry and desolate much like a desert? We can build a highway in the desert for our God during Advent. After all, the heart is just where Jesus wants to reside and He brings peace in the process.

It is my prayer that you and I re-invite Jesus into our hearts as we prepare to celebrate his birth. "Come quickly, Lord Jesus, amid the noise and the haste. Enter in and reclaim your rightful place."

Blessings, Pastor Rick



Our Sympathy to . . .

Jacie Minick and her family upon the death of her husband Mike. Mike, a long time member of St. Mark died October 29, 2014. Services were held at St. Mark on November 1st at St. Mark.

Movie Night is on "Holiday"

Movie Night will not take place in December, but should resume in January.

Inquirer's Class

Wednesday, December 10th - 6:30 p.m.

If you have been worshipping with us at St. Mark Presbyterian Church for a while and want a better understanding of what we're all about, you may have some questions.

- *Who are the Presbyterians?*
- *What do they believe?*
- *What do they do?*
- *What is their history?*
- *What has their influence been?*



Bring your questions about being Presbyterian to Pastor Rick's Inquirer's Class.

Sunday Sermons, Scriptures and Events

December 7

"God's Gift of Adoption"
Isaiah 61:1-3; Galatians 4:1-7
2nd Sunday of Advent
Celebration of the Lord's Supper



December 14

"God's Gift of Light"
Isaiah 9:2-7; John 1:1-14
3rd Sunday of Advent
Christmas Dinner

December 21

Lessons & Carols
4th Sunday of Advent

December 24

Fellowship: 5:30 p.m.
Christmas Eve Worship: 6:00 p.m.

December 28

"God's Gift of Calling"
Micah 5:2-5a; Matthew 2:1-12



God Bless You On Your Birthday

December 2
Phyllis Miller

December 3
Trey Curry
Collin Stephen

December 6
Voni Robinson

December 7
Leigh Taylor

December 9
Pam McGuire

December 10
Randall McGee

December 11
Mary Moffit



December 13
Alex Crawley

December 14
Becky Page

December 15
Ron McMahon

December 21
Jana McIntosh

December 27
Clint Taylor

December 29
Sheila Wahl

December 31
Julia Holloway
Diane Thorton

White Rock Center of Hope
Sunday, December 14th

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



Urgent needs

Winter coats, jackets in all sizes, pajamas for children
and blankets

Food & Pantry Needs

Macaroni & Cheese, Canned Tomato Products,
Canned Corn & Green Beans, Jelly, Hamburger Helper,
Suddenly Salad, Potatoes, Holiday food items, etc.

Personal Hygiene Items

Adult toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Deodorant, all sizes
of Diapers & Feminine Hygiene products

Pastor's Discretionary Fund



The Pastor's Discretionary Fund is running low
and could use your support. Please consider
renewing an old tradition by putting one Christmas
Card to your friends in the congregation on the
Bulletin Board by Pat's office and direct the money
you save on postage to the Pastor's Fund.

The Church Pantry Urgently Needs . . .

Jelly, Canned Pork & Beans, Corn, etc.
and Fruit Packs or cans

Please remember . . .

all cans MUST have pull-top lids.



Welcome New Members . . .

Betty & Bob Skinner
Dallas, TX 75211

Wally Stasz
Rowlett, TX 75088

Ann Gordon
Dallas, TX 75228

Thank You

November 14, 2014

Dear St. Mark Family and Friends,

It was with a little apprehension that I returned to
church last Sunday. I knew I would have to face
coming without Mike and face a changed life. I would
be sitting in the same sanctuary where almost 30
years ago Mike and I were married, the same
sanctuary in which we had just the week before said
our last good-byes, the same sanctuary where we said
our last good-byes to Tim too, so many years ago. I
felt that I would be on display...when I really am a
person that grieves quietly and privately.

But what really happened was that I saw my family,
felt warm, supportive hugs, heard words of loss and
comfort, experienced love and caring, felt as if I were
home, protected by all of you...felt as if I were in the
embrace of our heavenly Father. Janet Taylor once
gave me a framed calligraphy quote that I have really
looked at many times in the last two months. It says,
"Peace is not the absence of trouble, but the presence
of God." And you, my St. Mark family, are the
embodiment of the meaning of Christian love. Your
visits, your cards, your cakes, your pralines, your
breads, your gifts, your food, your calls, your e-mails,
your muscles, your hugs, your comforting concerned
words, and your sitting side by side with me have
lifted me and I thank you for all of it, and I thank God
that you and I are in the same family.

Love, Jacie Minick

Yoga Classes Take Holiday Break

Our last class for 2014 will be Sunday, December 21st.
We will resume classes on Sunday, January 11, 2015.



Some Advent Odds and Ends

Yes the season of Advent is just beginning and Christmas is still several weeks away even though Christmas music and displays have been in the stores since they cleared out the Halloween goodies.

What are you doing in this season of preparation? Do you have a favorite activity? Perhaps a book you read each year. Or a special spiritual discipline or practice. Or some special acts of kindness. Or maybe you gracefully receive the acts of kindness from other folks.

There are some folks who may need a bit of extra attention this time of year. Perhaps you may be called to bring or reflect a bit of peace, hope, love, and joy into their lives. You might pay particular attention to folks who have had major transitions in the last few months. Those transitions may be typically joyful ones such as marriages, births of babies and grandbabies, and sending kids off to college or new jobs. Or they may be sad ones such as the loss of a family member or a close friend. Keep your eyes, ears, and hearts open for ways that you may be of help.

The "Randall's Odds and Ends" Bulletin board is back up. Check it out for new items every few weeks including some Advent suggestions.

My final item is not officially an Advent item but it could seen as a time of preparation that may lead to the beginning of some new things. Last month Joanne Szalay and Linda Youmans attended a four day conference on "Sparkling Imagination and Resilience for God's Changing World." I know that they have been talking with some groups and individuals about what they learned. If you haven't already chatted with them about the conference why don't you ask them about it?

Randall McGee, Director of Christian Education

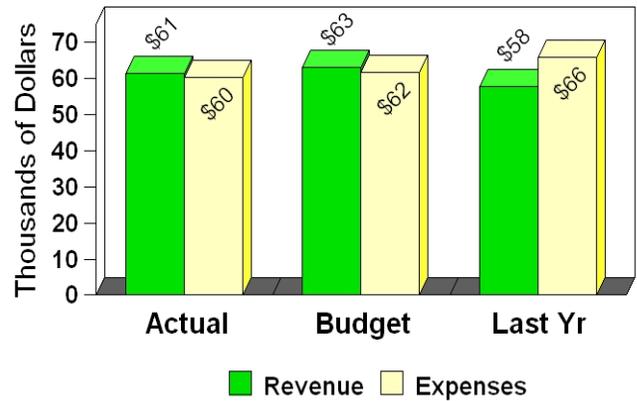
Newsletter Staff:

Pat Bilger office@saintmarkchurch.org
Cecilia Grayson

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

Newsletter Deadline is December 15th

Operating Fund 4 Months Through Oct 31, 2014



Treasurer's Report

for the four months ending 10/31/2014

- ⇒ Operating Fund income \$1,800 below budget and expenses are \$1,300 below budget. Both are much better than last year after four months.
- ⇒ Capital and Facilities Fund income is \$400 below budget and expenses are \$1,300 below budget.
- ⇒ Our Current Fund Balance (all funds combined) is up \$1,600 from the beginning of the year, and up \$12,500 from the same month last year.

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

Would You Like to Help Welcome Visitors?

The Membership & Evangelism Committee is trying to establish how to best welcome our visitors and new members. Are you currently welcoming visitors and new members? If so, let us know so we can both thank you and coordinate with you. And if this sounds like something you would like to join with us to start doing, please tell someone on the committee. The more, the merrier!

Committee members include Michael Bell, Rick Brooks, Teri Brooks, Marilyn Jackson, Carolyn McInnis, Emily McIntosh, Dorothy Moore, Jeff Taylor, and Dick Waters.

Directory Update

Barbara Klein
Garland, TX 75043



**St. Mark Women's Group
Christmas Party
Thursday, December 11th
6:30 p.m. in the parlor**

This year we are collecting items to give to our homebound members. Please bring your favorite finger food to share with the group. After a short business meeting, we will work together to put our gift bags together. We will also ask for volunteers to deliver the Christmas gifts to our homebound members.

Please contact Marilyn Jackson for list of items needed for the bags and if you are interested in helping with the project.

"Sock Tree"



As the Holiday Season nears, please look for the "Sock Tree" in the parlor. The Mission and Outreach Committee is asking you to give the gift of a pair of socks this Christmas, and will distribute them during the holidays. No need to wrap them. Please place your heart gift at the tree. This simple gift of warmth will bless another this holiday season. Thank you!



Thanks to Ellen Roberts for our new flower calendar. If you wish to donate flowers for the sanctuary on Sunday mornings, please sign the calendar on the wall outside Pat's



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Non-Profit Organization